



January 23, 2006

Actions Taken by the Senate in Response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita

Third Emergency Katrina Supplemental (Provision in the Department of Defense Appropriations, FY 2006) – P.L. 109-148

This law provides \$29 billion in aid for victims of Hurricane Katrina, including \$3 billion in funding to help strengthen Louisiana levees, \$6.2 billion in Community Development Block Grants to help Gulf Coast communities rebuild, and \$1.6 billion in funding to school districts educating students displaced by hurricanes. Of this funding, \$23.40 billion is offset by reallocations from the Federal Emergency Management Disaster Relief Fund, and the remaining Katrina funding is offset by various rescissions and an across-the-board-cut of one percent that applies to most discretionary accounts.

Elementary and Secondary Education Recovery Act (Provision in the Department of Defense Appropriations, FY 2006) – P.L. 109-148

This provision authorizes \$1.66 billion in funds to provide aid for states affected by Hurricane Katrina to restart school operations, provide temporary emergency aid for displaced students, and assist homeless youth. This law also permits the Secretary of Education to extend deadlines under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act for those affected by Katrina or Rita.

Katrina Higher Education Relief (Provision in the Department of Defense Appropriations, FY 2006) – P.L. 109-148

This provision would provide waivers for certain student loans for students who were attending institutions of higher learning in the Gulf Coast region affected by Hurricane Katrina. It also provides assistance under the Higher Education Act to students and institutions affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Coast Guard Hurricane Relief Act of 2005 – P.L. 109-141

This law authorizes the Coast Guard to extend the duration of a license or certificate for Merchant Seamen in Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi, or those whose records were destroyed due to flooding in New Orleans. It also extends inspection compliance certificates for vessels last inspected in Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi, and it allows Coast Guard personnel who served on active duty for 30 days in areas affected by Katrina to retain accumulated leave, which otherwise would have been forfeited.

Gulf Opportunity Zone Act of 2005 – P.L. 109-135

This law creates a Gulf Opportunity Zone in the region affected by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma to encourage businesses to rebuild in the region and provide employment opportunities. In particular the law provides tax provisions such as a bonus depreciation and enhanced small business expensing, and it also provides for the issuance of tax exempt bonds to help finance reconstruction costs.

Study and Report on Catastrophic Hurricane Evacuation Plans (S.A. 2168, to H.R. 3058, the Transportation, Treasury, Judiciary, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations, FY 2006) – P.L. 109-115

This law provides \$1 million in funding for the Departments of Transportation and Homeland Security to conduct a joint review to assess catastrophic hurricane evacuation plans and submit their findings to Congress by June 1, 2006.

Funds for Louisiana for Increased Traffic due to Hurricanes (Provision included in the Conference Report to Accompany the Transportation, Treasury, Judiciary, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations, FY 2006) – P.L. 109-115

The conference agreement provides \$1.5 million to the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development to establish a grant program for implementation of plans to alleviate traffic congestion and address increased transportation demands for parish and municipal governments that experienced a significant spike in population due to an influx of hurricane evacuees.

Additional Forecasters for the National Hurricane Center (Provision included in the Conference Report to accompany the Science, State, Justice, Commerce Appropriations bill, FY 2006) – P.L. 109-108

This provision provides \$500,000 in funding to the National Hurricane Center for the purpose of hiring four new hurricane forecasters.

National Flood Insurance Program Further Enhanced Borrowing Authority Act of 2005 – P.L. 109-106

This law increases the borrowing authority of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) from \$3.5 billion to \$18.5 billion through FY 2008 to pay the National Flood Insurance Program's flood damage claims through the next few months.

Hurricane Katrina Unemployment Relief (Provision in the QI, TMA & Abstinence Programs Extension and Hurricane Katrina Unemployment Relief Act) – P.L. 109-91

This law transfers money from the federal trust fund to the Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama unemployment trust funds to help those states pay unemployment benefits.

Community Disaster Loan Act of 2005 – P.L. 109-88

This law will allow up to \$750 million of the funds appropriated under P.L. 109-62, the Second Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Hurricane Katrina, to be transferred to the Disaster Assistance Direct Loan Program to be used to assist local governments in providing essential services.

Emergency Airport Improvement Project Grants in Aid – P.L. 109-87

This law authorizes the Secretary of Transportation to provide airport development project grants to support infrastructure repair projects for public-use airports in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Texas that were damaged by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Natural Disaster Student Aid Fairness Act – P.L. 109-86

This law authorizes the Secretary of Education during FY 2006 to reallocate campus-based student aid funds to institutions of higher learning in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Texas, or institutions that have accepted students displaced by Hurricanes Katrina or Rita. The law also waives requirements for matching funds that are normally imposed on institutions and students.

Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita Act of 2005 – P.L. 109-82

This law empowers the Department of Education to waive the non-federal share for states affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita that seek unused FY 2005 funds for vocational rehabilitation. Additional funds may be used for supplemental training to help individuals with disabilities gain the necessary skills to help with the reconstruction and redevelopment of impacted communities.

Student Aid Waiver – P.L. 109-78

This law extends the authority of the Secretary of the Department of Education to waive student loan rules during a war or national emergency until September 30, 2007.

Katrina Emergency Tax Relief Act of 2005 – P.L. 109-73

This law provides tax relief for victims of Hurricane Katrina and contains provisions to encourage charitable contributions toward the relief effort in the affected region. Specifically, the law allows affected individuals to access their retirement savings without incurring penalties for early withdrawals, to deduct 100 percent of casualty losses, and to exclude from tax certain relief assistance. The act also provides incentives for businesses in the region to hire displaced workers and additional tax incentives to support regional employment and reconstruction, with an emphasis on encouraging displaced residents to return to the affected areas.

Flexibility for Displaced Workers Act – P.L. 109-72

This law allows for greater flexibility in the use of National Emergency Grants to provide temporary disaster relief and training for individuals who have relocated to regions outside of the Katrina-affected areas and to those who assist in disaster recovery.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Emergency Response and Recovery Act of 2005 – P.L. 109-68

This law makes immediate payment of TANF funds for the first quarter of FY 2006 to all states, and makes additional TANF funds available to states devastated by Hurricane Katrina by converting an existing loan fund into a contingency fund for Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. It holds states harmless for costs incurred to immediately assist evacuees, provides states with flexibility to spend unused TANF funds for families impacted by the hurricane, waives program rules for hurricane victims receiving short-term TANF assistance, and waives penalties on states that resulted from efforts to support families impacted by the hurricane.

Student Grant Hurricane and Disaster Relief Act – P.L. 109-67

This law authorizes the Secretary of Education to waive certain repayment requirements for students receiving campus-based federal grant assistance efforts if they were residing in, employed in, or attending an institution of higher education located in a major disaster area, or their attendance was interrupted because of the disaster.

Pell Grant Hurricane and Disaster Relief Act – P.L. 109-66

This law authorizes the Secretary of Education to waive certain repayment requirements for hurricane-affected students receiving federal Pell Grants. This waiver is necessary because under current law, Pell Grant recipients who are forced to withdraw from classes due to a natural disaster are required to repay any Pell Grant funds used to pay for school expenses, or they will be barred from enrolling in future classes.

Income Exclusion of Flood Insurance Mitigation Payments – P.L. 109-64

This law allows for the exclusion of federal flood mitigation assistance from consideration as income or a resource for purposes of determining an applicant's eligibility for certain federal income-assistance or resourced-based programs.

Federal Judiciary Emergency Special Sessions Act of 2005 – P.L. 109-63

This law authorizes courts displaced by Hurricane Katrina to operate outside of the courts' regular circuit or district.

Second Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act to Meet Immediate Needs Arising From the Consequences of Hurricane Katrina, 2005 – P.L. 109-62

This law provides an additional \$51.8 billion in emergency funding to continue recovery and relief efforts in the areas impacted by Hurricane Katrina.

Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act to Meet Immediate Needs Arising From the Consequences of Hurricane Katrina, 2005 – P.L. 109-61

This law provides \$10.5 billion in emergency funding to provide immediate assistance to Gulf States affected by Hurricane Katrina. Specifically, this law provides \$10 billion to the Department of Homeland Security for disaster relief and \$500 million to the Department of Defense for operations and maintenance.

Temporary Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) for Katrina Areas (Provision in S. 1932, Deficit Reduction Act) – Passed Senate

This provision would provide a temporary increase in FMAP percentages for states affected by Hurricane Katrina. States would receive 100-percent FMAP reimbursement for Medicaid and SCHIP assistance for individuals who, during the week prior to Hurricane Katrina, were living in one of the parishes of Louisiana or counties of Mississippi and Alabama specified in the bill. Costs directly attributable to related administrative activities would also be fully reimbursed.

Coastal Disaster Assistance (Provision in S. 1932, Deficit Reduction Act) – Passed Senate

This provision would provide an additional \$200 million to assist states and local Indian tribes affected by hurricanes and other coastal disasters.

Katrina Education Reimbursement (S. 1764) – Passed Senate

This bill would allow the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security to transfer funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to the Department of Education in order to provide assistance to schools that have accepted students displaced by Hurricane Katrina.

Judicial Branch Employee Participation in Federal Leave Transfer Program for Disasters and Emergencies (S. 1736) – Passed Senate

This bill would allow employees of the Federal Judiciary branch of government to participate in emergency-leave transfer programs for disasters and emergencies.

Gulf Coast Emergency Water Infrastructure Assistance Act (S. 1709) – Passed Senate

This bill would allow states to provide subsidies and loan forgiveness for water treatment and water quality projects related to Hurricane Katrina, for a two-year period, from funds allocated to states from the revolving loans under the Federal Water Pollution Control Act. The bill also allows states to provide funds to water treatment plants that are not included under the Safe Drinking Water Act for up to two years, and authorizes the Environmental Protection Agency to test drinking water from private wells that may be contaminated as a result of Hurricane Katrina.

Disaster Recovery and Debris Removal Act of 2005 (S. 939) – Passed Senate

This bill would authorize the payment to disaster relief applicants of up to 50 percent of the Federal share for which that applicant is eligible. This assistance will expedite the

process of clearing and removing hurricane-related debris from public access roads and private property.

A resolution to permit the solicitation of donations in Senate buildings for the relief of victims of Hurricane Katrina (S. Res. 235) – Passed Senate

This bill allows Senators or Senate employees to solicit another Senator or Senate employee for non-monetary donations for the relief of victims of Hurricane Katrina and to work with nonprofit organizations to deliver those donations.